

## Rare Books

### Bad Catalogues and Prices News of the Trade and Dealers The Season's Closing Sales

THAT it is essential that books be sold by people who know what they are doing has again been demonstrated in a sale held in a room of a big hotel a short time ago. The best catalogues of the auction concerns are not always all they should be; but that of the sale here noted was fearfully and wonderfully made, poorly printed, and a brilliant example of how not to do it. Good books that usually bring satisfactory prices under proper conditions were slaughtered.

There is not a little careless catalogue work done by dealers and auction houses for which there is no excuse. If the title page of a book is not given verbatim it is of no use and is likely to be a false description. A book that appears often in catalogues is James Whitcomb Riley's *Neighborhood Poems*, the first edition of which is dated 1891 and is invariably quoted as *Neighborhood Poems*.

#### Huns and Helmets.

One John Bulwer, in 1633, published a work with the title *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd; or, The Artificial Changing Historically presented, In the mad and cruel Gallantry, foolish Bravery, ridiculous Beauty, filthy Fineness, and loathsome Lowliness of most Nation fashioning and altering their Bodies from the mold intended by Nature*. In describing the Germans, he says on page 123, "The Huns, a most cruel nation were wont to flat the noses of their Boyes, least it should be a hindrance to the putting on their Helmets."

In THE SUN of May 26 it was announced that Max Breslow had sold a stock of first editions. A note from Mr. Breslow pleads

not guilty and asks that correction be made. It is proper to say that the information came to *Books and the Book World* from a reputable source, was relied upon as being correct and was published as interesting trade news.

Quiet times are ahead for the next three months, although it is believed that business will be better than in recent summers because it is probable that fewer buyers will leave town.

#### Review of Auctions.

THE SUN will shortly publish a review of the auction season covering all the important sales that have been held in the United States since last October.

An important element to certain book dealers are those who buy expensive sets. These persons were in evidence in one of the auction rooms recently when the catalogue was largely made up of these gaudy looking volumes, the prices being very high.

Dealers on this side of the Atlantic will learn with regret that *Simpkin's Bulletin*, a valuable work of reference, will be temporarily suspended because of the paper shortage in England.

The Malowitz Book Shop opened its doors this week, for the first time, at 65 West 125th street.

#### Personal Notes.

His skill as a bibliographer has given Oscar Wegelin a reputation on the other side of the ocean as on this. Mr. Wegelin has just published a bibliography of the separate publications of James Kirke Paulding, the poet, novelist, humorist and statesman, 1779-1860, containing thirty-three titles, in which the first edition of each is described.

How they do rake up unpleasant subjects these days! Halliwell Phillips has arrayed himself with the Baconians by stating that the Stratford of Shakespeare's time was bookless.

Adolph Stager is off on a collecting tour to the westward.

#### Catalogues Received.

Cadmus Book Shop, 133 West Thirty-third street. The library of Charles B. Moore, 1,454 numbers. This house has been noted among collectors for years for the Americana it has turned up. The present catalogue presents a large array of rare books and pamphlets.

Thomas F. Madigan, 505 Fifth avenue. Autographs of famous personages, ninety-two items. Among the other rare items is a letter of Robert Fulton on the subject of submarine warfare, in which he says: "Anxious for the liberty of the seas, and believing it may be obtained by improvements in the application of gunpowder in submarine explosion," &c. There are letters of former Presidents and authors.

W. A. Gough, 25 West Forty-second street. English books and pamphlets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 399 numbers. A considerable number of uncommon items. Mr. Gough has furnished interesting notes.

#### Coming Sales.

At Scott & O'Shaughnessy's, June 11, philatelic books and periodicals, 229 numbers. Stamp collectors will find many exceedingly rare pieces, some of which have not turned up in the auction room for a long time.

At the Walpole Galleries, June 13, miscellaneous books.

At Sotheby's, July 19, part seven of the famous Huth library, 1,122 items. The lover of old English literature will find in this section some of the rarest books in the language; in a few cases no other copies are known. The early poets and dramatists are represented in large number with a generous number of items of excessively rare Americana.

The last book sale of the season at Anderson's was held on Monday last, when the library of W. M. Cooper was sold. It was composed of many sets in bindings, and prices seemed to be very high. The usual attendance of dealers in this kind of stock as well as many private buyers made up an audience that kept things moving.

## "Flower-Name Fancies"



WHAT'S this? Why, a drawing by Guy Pierre Fauconnet in his little book, *Flower-Name Fancies*. This particular picture is a bit of fancifulness inspired by the foxglove. The English rhyme on the page facing it, by Hampden Gordon, runs:

It's most unorthodox  
For any clever fox  
To be seen about in gloves at any time.  
The awful reason why  
He wears them on the sly  
Is not the sort of thing to tell in rhyme!

Maybe not, but as there is no English prose in the book how are we to find out?

No doubt we'll live just as long if we don't. The book has French rhymes and sentiments by the artist and Mr. Gordon's English verses, which are not translations of the French by any means. But of course it exists for the sake of the pictures, and for no other reason. They are large, graceful and highly decorative. Children will be fascinated by them, many grownups will admire them and amateur artists of all ages will try to copy them. Well, it is good practice.

FLOWER NAME FANCIES. By GUY PIERRE FAUCONNET. John Lane Company. \$1.25.

### "Tropical Town"

SALOMON DE LA SELVA'S poems as a book have been a long time in making their appearance. For several years the world of poetry has regarded him with a unique and absorbed interest, the enthusiastic attention of such eminent men of letters as William Dean Howells and others too numerous to mention having been attracted by his exquisite gift. He is the most distinguished of the younger Latin American poets and his translations from the Spanish have become widely known.

*Tropical Town and Other Poems* is a remarkable first collection, the fruit of a gift which does not come often in a generation, and one cannot say too much for such poetry as *The Box of Sandalwood*, from which we quote the fourth sonnet:

The colours of her body were all clean  
And transparent and fine and tinged with gold;  
Her bosom had the pallor of an old  
Kerchief of linen woven for a queen,  
Her arms a whiteness where the pulses  
hushed;  
She had pearl shadows where the eyelids  
swell,  
And in her eyes gray depths of miracle,  
And dawn itself blushed envious when she  
blushed.  
Ah me, that all of this I must forego!  
My eyes are pleasureless under the sun;

There are no lovely lights on sea or snow:  
Hers only were the colours of the world;  
I told them now, as when a war is done  
The beaten flags are taken down and furled.

He has that rich and colorful play of words which is the result of familiarity with several languages combined with all the warmth and passion of his tropical nature. One would expect his work to show a certain eroticism, but there can be no preparation for a lewdness such as he shows in many of the poems.

There are many verses inspired by his love of country, and Nicaragua has probably never figured so prominently in song as it does here. But one section of his book is devoted to praise of New England, and here are many lovely tributes. The dedication of his verses would lead to the supposition that no one love has blotted out all others and there is great difficulty in deciding where, if anywhere, his heart abides. It is hard to leave these poems without giving a fairer idea of their beauty, which can only be done by quotations. Perhaps the four lines entitled *Worn Toy* will help:

As a child gives what it no more desires,  
With a quick gesture and averterly,  
Grown weary of her heart, as a child tires  
Of a worn toy, she gave her heart to me.

TROPICAL TOWN AND OTHER POEMS. By SALOMON DE LA SELVA. John Lane Company. \$1.25.

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